



USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Template Version 2.09

Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 3/21/2006

GAIN Report Number: IS6007

Israel

Poultry and Products

Avian Influenza 3-21-2006

2006

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Report Highlights:

On March 20, 2006 the Ministry of Agriculture confirmed that the H5N1 virus had been detected in two new locations in the southern part of Israel. Both locations are within the 10 kilometers from the first cases of bird flu at Ein Ha'Shlosha and Holit. Up till now six locations of AI were found in Israel. Israel authorities announced an AI compensation plan. The MOA has requested tenders for 5,000 tons of poultry meat for immediate import.

Includes PSD Changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
Tel Aviv [IS1]
[IS]

On March 20, the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) confirmed that the H5N1 virus was found at Kibbutz Nir Oz and the community of Amioz in the southern part of Israel. This is the first case of confirmed H5N1 in broilers and layers. Till now only turkey farms were found positive.

Yesterday (March 20), the Veterinary Services stopped the slaughter of 33,000 birds that had been delivered from Amioz to the Ofkor poultry processing plant in the southern part of the country. Although these birds had been tested negative for AI, it was decided to destroy the entire delivery and all the birds in the plant (approximately 50 tons) because they came from an affected area.

The number of sites now reporting cases of bird flu has risen to six (see annex 1). To date, 430,000 birds have been destroyed within the "first circles" (within 3 km from the identified farms). The ministry of Agriculture estimates that at least 800,000-900,000 birds will have to be destroyed by this weekend, in order to prevent the spread of the infection. The estimated cost of the culling is \$1 million.

While writing this report another farm was found suspicious for AI in the area of Kiryat Gat. Veterinarians in the West Bank reported unusual deaths in wild birds. The carcasses handed over to the Israeli Vet. Service for testing.

According to official sources, the slow pace of dealing with bird carcasses is due to manpower and equipment shortage. Workers and truck drivers are refusing to work, as they are afraid of becoming sick. In order to aid the process, approximately 160 contract workers from the Defense Ministry were going to join the destruction efforts on March 21. The government allocated \$1.1 million for the additional manpower.

The government announced its AI compensation plan, estimating that approximately \$4.5 million will be granted to the damaged farms. However, preliminary estimates by the Israel Egg and Poultry Board indicates that due to public panic and fear of buying poultry and poultry products, the poultry industry is likely to lose approximately \$25.5 million. Compensation will be delivered according to the poultry kind and age. The maximum compensation per turkey, male or female, at market age will be \$23.4 and \$11.7 respectively, and \$2.6 for a broiler.

The Israeli poultry industry is asking for the bird flu crisis to be declared a "natural disaster" by the government, which will increase the compensation. However, the Ministry of Agriculture announced that it is premature to declare the outbreak of the AI a natural disaster as it is still localized and has not yet reached the level of a national crisis. On March 21, the Ministries of Health and Agriculture opened an avian flu hotline.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) reports that the AI virus has not been found in the territory. The Israeli Veterinary Services has offered to test samples, however, the PA has not sent any samples to date. There is a shortage of safety gear in the PA and Israel announced it will send the equipment to the Palestinians, upon their official request.

Following the announcement of the first Israeli AI cases, the EU banned imports of all poultry and processed products from Israel. In addition, there is expected to be a shortage of poultry in Israel, especially for Passover during April, when traditional meals include all kinds of poultry. The outbreak of bird flu will likely cause an increase in food prices, especially beef and fish. Poultry prices are expected to increase.

The MOA has requested tenders for 5,000 tons of poultry meat for immediate import.

Approximately 80 percent of Israel's poultry consumption is fresh meat. An estimated 4,090 poultry growers of various kinds make up the local poultry industry. Local Consumption of chicken and turkey per capita stands at 36 kg and 10 kg per year, respectively. In addition, Israeli consumption of eggs per capita totaled 238 eggs per year.

Annex 1: AI Sites in Israel



AI sites: Nahshon, Sde Moshe, Ein Haslosa, Nir Oz, Amioz and Holit.